

REMARKS

Applicants acknowledge Examiners Griffin's and Arnold's time and courtesy during the personal interview with applicants' representative James E. Ruland on 12 November 2003. See Interview Summary. Below is a summary of that interview.

No exhibit was shown or demonstration conducted, claim 14 was discussed, U.S. Patent No. 5,114,562 (Haun) was discussed, and no amendments were proposed.

Arguments

Claims 14-19, 21-24 and 27-33 stand rejected as allegedly being obvious over Haun in view of EP 0 419 266 A1 (Sawyer), and claims 25-26 stand rejected as allegedly being obvious over Haun in view of Sawyer and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,925,549 (Robinson). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

None of the applied references teaches or suggests an H₂/HC ratio of 200-600 liters per liter in a third stage in which saturated sulfur-containing compounds remaining in the gasoline are at least partially transformed into H₂S. Supererogatorily, a declaration submitted June 5, 2003, provides evidence of significant and unexpected results of the present invention. Particularly, an example according to the invention (Example 7) is compared to a comparative example (Example 6). The operating conditions in Example 7 are the same as in Example 6 except that the H₂/HC ratio at the reactor 2 inlet is increased to 220 liters per liter of feedstock. As depicted in the tables, Example 7 obtains a greater weight percent of olefins and octane number in its product as compared to the product of Example 6. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that this higher H₂/HC ratio leading to a higher content of olefins and octane numbers provides significant and unexpected results in comparison to

Example 6. Consequently, applicants respectfully submit that this evidence of unexpected results clearly supports the patentability of the claimed invention.

Applicants note that the claims sometimes cite "H2" as in "H2S" (see, e.g., line 4 of claim 14) and "H₂" as in "H₂/HC" (see, e.g., line 10 of claim 14). Applicants respectfully submit there is no difference whether the "2" is in the form of a subscript or not, namely a "2" following the symbol "H" means two hydrogen atoms are present in the respective molecule. Even though one of ordinary skill in this field would appreciate the alternative representation, if the Examiner wishes, applicants will revise the specification and the claims so as to use the subscript 2 throughout.

In view of the above, favorable reconsideration is courteously requested. If there are any remaining issues which can be expedited by a telephone conference, the examiner is courteously invited to telephone counsel at the number indicated below.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees associated with this response or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 13-3402.

Respectfully submitted,

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